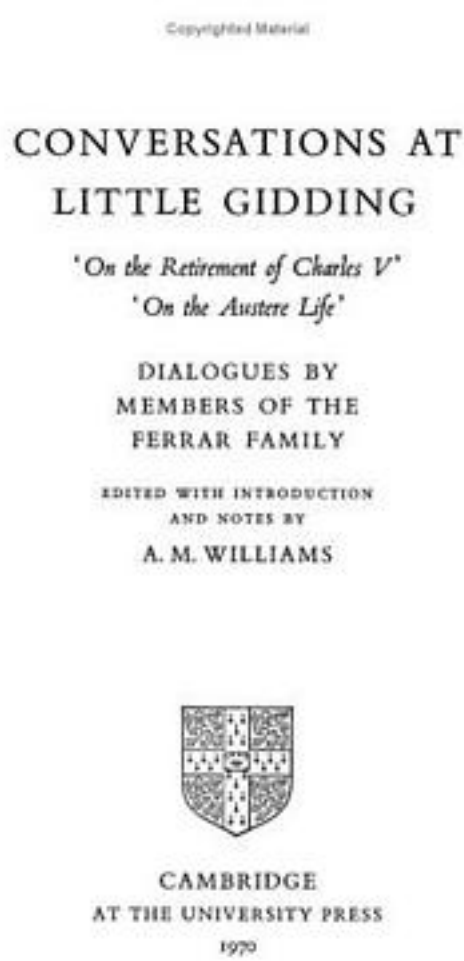


Conversations at Little Gidding



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One of the most original aspects of life at Little Gidding was the 'Little Academy' founded by Nicholas Ferrar, his nieces and some other members of the community for their common instruction and enjoyment. At regular meetings, members of the Little Academy took it in turns to relate 'stories' based on historical or current events. Ferrar kept transcripts both of the stories and of the subsequent social and personal applications, from which Mr Williams has reproduced two of the 'Conversations' which occupied the family attention for some time. The conversation centred on the resignation of the Holy Roman Emperor Charles V elicited lengthy discussions of what the Ferrars felt to be the degeneracy of their own times in public and private life. The family concern with austerity in diet frequently diverged into general criticism of the licence and luxury of the upper classes in the early 1600s. Mr Williams has provided a very full introduction and notes describing the members of the Little Academy and giving the background of the two dialogues that he has reproduced.

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